

VENICE NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

Preserving Public Places Ad Hoc Committee vote: 3 yes; 0 no; 0 abstain

RESTORATION OF THE VENICE LIFEGUARD HEADQUARTERS TOWER

Whereas the iconic, architecturally, culturally and historically significant Venice Lifeguard Headquarters Tower located at 2300 Ocean Front Walk was built together with the single story building surrounding it in 1968 is owned by the City of Los Angeles, within Council District 11 and maintained by the County of Los Angeles Department of Beaches and Harbors for use by the Los Angeles Lifeguards through a **Joint Powers Agreement**;

Whereas, in 2014, LA County chose to move the lifeguard headquarters to the South Bay and not repair and maintain the Tower which was lifeguard headquarters for over 50 years;

Whereas, with no public notice nor outreach, including to adjacent neighbors nor the Venice Neighborhood Council, The Department of Beaches and Harbors requested and was awarded July 2022 a de minimus waiver from the CA Coastal Commission, a **Coastal Development Permit** CDP, to demolish the tower, only, while retaining the nondescript single story base building. No documentation nor feasibility study was presented as to why this unique, iconic tower would be destroyed, nor that any effort was made to repurpose it, if it is no longer needed by lifeguards, although a 2014 **Assessment Report** has been obtained describing the recommended maintenance;

Whereas Venice has few publicly owned buildings and the demand for such, including for museums by LA County Lifeguards and the Venice Oceanarium, exceeds availability;

Whereas the Tower provides an outstanding, and unmatched, expansive view of Santa Monica Bay and is identified as historic by the LA **Department of Historic Resources**;

Whereas if the Tower were demolished, it would leave a **nondescript eyesore** single story building with no visual merit on our public beach and the Tower would likely never be rebuilt;

Whereas, if made accessible to the public, funds for restoration could be available from non-profit organizations, private donors, LA Olympics, tourism entities and the public, in addition to government sources;

Whereas repurposing the Lifeguard Tower as a community asset would create an exceptional cultural enrichment, environmental and educational venue for the entire community, including residents and visitors of all ages and cultural heritages;

Whereas Over 1000 Venice residents, current and retired LA lifeguards & lifeguard chiefs, ocean ecologists, cultural and historic preservationists, surfers and beachgoers have signed a **petition to save the Venice Lifeguard Tower**;

Now Therefore, The Venice Neighborhood Council requests that the California Coastal Commission, Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors, and the City of Los Angeles

refrain from demolishing the Venice Lifeguard Headquarters Tower until the feasibility of its repairs and restoration for use by lifeguards OR other purpose such as a public observation tower and/or lifeguard / ocean or other museum can be fully evaluated in conjunction with representatives of the Preserving Public Places Venice Neighborhood Council Committee, and public and private nonprofit organizations identified herein.

Supporters include:

Retired Lifeguard Section Chief, LA County Fire Department: Mickey Gallagher
Venice Oceanarium Founding Director: Tim Rudnick
Adjacent Property Owner: Diana Lorber
Educator & Chair VNC & Venice Chamber Education Committees: Joelle Dumas
Estate of Venice Black Forefather Arthur L. Reese: Sonya Reese Greenland, Trustee

Supporting Documents:

Joint Powers Agreement: <https://www.venicenc.org/ncfiles/download/60>
Photograph of Venice Lifeguard Station Tower: <https://www.venicenc.org/assets/documents/5/meeting63755db436816.jpg>
1968 Dedication: <https://www.venicenc.org/assets/documents/5/meeting636ee6723b371.jpg>
Historic Places LA: <http://historicplacesla.org/reports/bf27d24d-24d1-4f4e-b4a5-6ecb0a9c7e94>
ZIMAS: <https://www.venicenc.org/assets/documents/5/committee63729768158db.png>
Beaches & Harbors Lifeguard Tower Demolition Rendering: <https://www.venicenc.org/assets/documents/5/meeting636ee6e18ca69.pdf>
2014 Building Assessment Report: <https://www.venicenc.org/assets/documents/5/committee63784cf025ff5.pdf>
CCC July 2022 CDP Waiver <https://www.venicenc.org/assets/documents/5/meeting636ee6e18ae62.pdf>
SAVE THE VENICE LIFEGUARD TOWER Petition: <https://www.change.org/VeniceLifeguard-Tower>

Distribution List:

Los Angeles City Councilperson District 11
Los Angeles County Department of Beaches & Harbors
Los Angeles Department of Recreation & Parks
California Coastal Commission
Mayor of the City of Los Angeles
Los Angeles County Supervisors
Los Angeles City Council
Los Angeles Office of Historic Preservation
Los Angeles Department of Public Works
Los Angeles County Department of Public Works
Los Angeles Olympics Organizing Committee
Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs